



## 23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 22, 2017

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### **Law and Order Committee advocates for stronger federal contracts for law enforcement and criminal investigations**

**WINDOW ROCK** – On Monday, the Law and Order Committee received a report from the Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety, Navajo Nation Judicial Branch, Navajo Nation Department of Justice, Navajo Nation Office of Management and Budget, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs Office of Justice Services, regarding the law enforcement and criminal investigations P.L. 93-638 contracts. The contracts will be subject for renewal for the upcoming fiscal year 2018.

LOC member Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood) stated that the entities involved need to update the contracts to justify the growing public safety needs and services within the Navajo Nation.

“The language within both contracts needs to be strengthened. The Nation has the obligation to negotiate the terms of the contracts. The deadline to modify the contracts is approaching quickly and we have not seen any working documents from the Division of Public Safety. The purpose of the changes is to pursue more funding for public safety services. The current contract is not strong enough to justify our needs,” stated Delegate Begay.

According to NNDOJ attorney Michelle Begay, the deadline to modify the Navajo Nation’s contracts is Oct. 1.

LOC chair Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau) asked NNDPS for an update on the status of the contract modifications.

Roanna Bennett with the BIA’s Office of Justice Services, stated that they encouraged NNDPS executive director Jesse Delmar to set a meeting date in the beginning of the year to review the contract modifications. Drastic changes to the contract will require additional time for review, but we have not received a meeting date from NNDPS, added Bennett.

“A lot of responsibility weighs heavily on the executive branch to complete these initiatives and we have not seen recommendations or inputs on updating the contracts. The Nation should not settle for the least amount of funding from the federal government,” stated LOC member Council Delegate Otto Tso (Tó Nanees Dizi).

The committee directed NNDPS to report the contract modifications in two months and work adjacently with NNDOJ and BIA OJS regarding the changes.

“We strongly urge NNDPS to begin working on the contract changes. Within the two months, the committee will continue to advocate at the state and federal level for public safety on the Nation. The committee plans to testify to Congress regarding the critical needs of public safety,” added Delegate Yazzie.

The Law and Order Committee approved the report with a 4-0 vote.

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